

ALABAMA STATE–COMMUNITY RECOVERY TASK FORCES

Natural and Cultural Resources Task Force Meeting

September 1, 2011

ATTENDEES

| NAME | AGENCY & INFORMATION | NAME | AGENCY & INFORMATION |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Virginia Morgan | Alabama Cooperative Extension Service | Rhea Williams | American Institute of Architects Birmingham |
| Sandy Bridges | FEMA Mitigation | Berry Bonney | FEMA Mitigation |
| Katerina Hardegan | FEMA Environmental | Rob Grant | ADECA |
| Tommy Thompson | Louisiana Pacific Corporation | Matt McCullough | Alabama Forestry Commission |
| Stuart McGregor | State Geological Survey | Brian Jones | Alabama Tourism Department |
| Grey Brennan | Alabama Tourism Department | Joshua Mosley | FEMA LTRC |
| Laura Clemons | FEMA LTRC | Steve Weatherford | FEMA LTRC |
| Tryon McLaney | ADECA | Kristin Kizziah | FEMA LTRC |
| Evan Kilgore | FEMA LTRC | Tami Todd | FEMA ERO |

SUMMARY

ACTION ITEMS

- **Contact county agent for Master Gardeners**
- **Need volunteer group to plant the seeds**
- **Get with the Green Ribbon program with the Department of Education**
- **Contact Phillip Morris with Design Alabama, American Association of Landscape Architects and the Birmingham Historical Society**

AGENDA ITEMS

Forestry Commission

- The Forestry Commission is glad to be a part of the recovery efforts
- Urban trees are important but small piece of restoring communities
- Trees are vital part of community identity, the communities have expressed interest and are seemingly anxious to restore the trees
- We want to leave a town better than we found it
- Two key issues
 - Safety; the trees have structural issues even if left standing, there are ‘time bombs’ left and we want to mitigate those trees

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- Reforestation; this is an educational opportunity, the communities that had a forest took it for granted, a lot of problems and damage could have been avoided if they had an urban forestry program
- Trees must go in the correct place, we want to put them where they are safer and use species that are more resilient to the wind for example the Southern Magnolia
- We love trees but there are issues that are consistent with FEMA mission and goals
- The greatest success we have seen was when a landscaper or visionary planner or urban forestry person used to put on staff and contract with them; this can be the key from success to failure
- The Forestry Commission knows that it needs to learn to work with FEMA better and establish more clear lines of communication
- One concern that cities are bringing up is they feel their cities look dull; we need to focus on how to bridge the gap to bring resources into these areas
- Another concern is once these communities have the trees how do we get them in the ground?
 - Volunteers
 - There is a need for some expertise
- RCD sponsors many of the projects that these communities may want but the US Department of Agriculture does small grants for small projects such as river restoration, help with parks, and they dedicated the FY-2011 funds for disaster related projects
- After the disaster hits it is important to patient in the recovery
- AFC data shows 60 communities were directly affected by the tornados with an estimated 12 million 200 tons in tree damage
- There are 4 main things to plan for reforestation
 - Risk assessment- the trees can be a hazard, it is a hazard when it has a target it can take out, leaning trees more than 30 degrees should come out
 - Trees Health- look at it from a structural stand point, if it has jagged limb we need to go in and prune
 - Remediate all damage
 - Long Term Recovery Effort
- The Forestry Commission has an office in every county, there is not a forester in every county but they can get one to come
- Each of these communities need to have a tree program because they will need to be taken care of and watered
 - Citizens may not think about the details until fully engaged in this program
 - Trees have to be properly maintained
 - A lot of injuries occur after the storm from people doing things that they should not be doing
- A campaign has been started between the Arbor Day Foundation and Alabama Forestry Commission to re-plant trees in areas affected
 - Vital to move this imitative forward

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- Master Gardeners will dedicate all their community service projects to planting trees; contact extension officer of contact their county agent
- Canopy by Design is a \$40,000.00 grant program
- The Forestry Commission gives a grant to Your Town Alabama; good organization to get with to design the cities
- Communities may want to consider a watering truck

Community Design

- Technical teams were not able to be here due to other meetings
- Hackleburg through the LTCR of FEMA and State Partners has developed a community design
- Hackleburg has a clean sheet to start from
 - They are looking at how they want to create their downtown and possibly and amphitheater
- Rainsville had its 1st visioning meeting 1 week ago; they are just at the point of throwing ideas on the table and they have about a month to a month and half to get to the point where Hackleburg is
- Once the plan is completed get the communities with the Forestry Commission to have someone show what trees will work best
- For an urban planner to come into a town the price can be from \$5,000 to \$15,000
- All communities are really looking at their downtown centers or looking to create one if it did not exist
- We have received a lot of questions about bike paths and walking trails
- Another concern is increasing broadband capabilities in these communities
- Looking to use the I-22 corridor for a tourist route

American Institute of Architects

- Historical buildings that communities want to salvage
- There is no money for this area
- American Association of Landscape Architects may be a possible resource
- The Birmingham Historical Society may be another resource
- Design Alabama may be willing to help preserve some historic sites

EPA Grant/ Tourism

- Submitted proposal last month with Tryon and Anne Keller dealing with the I-22 Corridor
- Goal is to bring tourism dollars to these areas
- Possible to look at a scenic river trail, year of food initiatives and are currently working on a music campaign
- Alabama.travel does a 'year of campaign' often for example this year's focus was on the dismal canyons

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- Another initiative for Alabama will be road trips that will be primarily web based and smart phone friendly
- Looking to work with the HGTV and Food Networks

Field Teams

- Any Communities that need guidance in regards to forestry please direct them to the Alabama Forestry Commission
- More help may be available it is just a matter of someone asking for it
- 3 day commitment to design and plan the communities may be too much to ask from the community leaders; some communities have already gone through some parts of the planning process
 - May be able to work with Your Town Alabama to get speakers for \areas where the design portion has been completed